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Monsters and the Anthropologist's Reality[1]

This article explores the psychological reality of the Wechuge phenomenon, in which a person is believed to be transformed into a cannibalistic monster, among the Dunne-za culture of northern British Columbia. The author links the relationship between the Dunne-za and the Wechuge to myths of giant spirit animals endowed with human capabilities, and he suggests that the symbolic mastery by the individual of his private spirit animal in the portrayal and imitation of these myths endows that individual with the "medicine power" to master his environment. If a person violates the taboos of his personal relationship with his spirit animal, he is in danger of becoming "Wechuge," and the fear of the crazed, antisocial behaviour associated with this state serves as a sanction against intentional violation of social conformity.

Organized anthropology has been systematically collecting information from the world's cultures for more than a century. During this time the attributes and appearances of thousands of "supernatural" beings and happenings have been described. In most cases these phenomena are accepted as real by members of the culture in which they are found but are not accepted as real by the anthropologist personally. Implicit in the anthropological understanding is a sense of the relativity of the information that constitutes a culture's reality. Professionally, the anthropologist interprets phenomena which he cannot personally experience as real as ethnographic data relevant to the subject culture's system of belief, but he seldom includes an examination of his own culture's system of belief as integral to the process of ethnographic description. Anthropology, of course, has examined closely the terms of its scientific epistemology, but it has paid less attention to the world view of its practitioners as personal participants in their own culture's system of belief than it has to the beliefs and practices of the people it studies. This paper will compare a traditional North American native system of belief, as represented by its image of monstrous beings, with the belief system of the anthropologist, as represented by the historical and evolutionary images of his own personal culture.

The anthropologist's own culture generally distinguishes between super-

natural and natural phenomena. Yet as Suttles has pointed out, this dichotomy does not accurately represent native conceptualizations of reality.[2] Whereas Western thought distinguishes between mythical and natural animals as being respectively symbolic and concrete, the native conceptualization of a natural species may contain attributes that belong in the Westerner's category of supernatural, and an animal that is purely supernatural to the Westerner may be classed with natural species in native thought. Sasquatch-like beings are an example of the latter category. The former category, monstrous forms of "natural" species, will be the subject of this paper. I will present and analyze the meaning of monsters in general among the Athapaskan Dunne-za of the Peace River area and, in particular, discuss the meaning of monster stories about Giant Wolverine.

In Dunne-za tradition, as in the traditions of many other North American native cultures, there was a time when the relations between people and animals were reversed. Giant animals that spoke and had culture hunted humans, who were their game. In the stories about this time, terms normally used to describe animals were applied to people, and human terms were used for the giant animals. For each animal species known today there was a giant form capable of exerting a controlling influence over humans. These animal people were overcome by a culture hero/transformer, Saya, who drove them beneath the surface of the earth and changed them into the forms that are known today.[3] The contours of the physical terrain inhabited by the Dunne-za are believed to reveal the shapes of the giant animals lurking beneath the earth's surface.

A Dunne-za child experiences animals first as food and clothing; growing up involves a redefinition of a person's individual relationship to them. When Dunne-za children are sent out into the bush to obtain "supernatural power," literally *mə yine,* or "its song," they experience directly the power of the giant animals. It is from these giant animals of mythic times that the Dunne-za acquire the powers that enable them to perform competently as adult members of their society. The giant animals are encountered directly by every normal person at the time of the childhood vision quest experience and they remain a constant presence behind the appearance of everyday reality. Through the vision quest people learn to exert a controlling influence over the animals of the real world.

The giant animals of mythic times are real to the Dunne-za because they represent the realities of Dunne-za adaptive experience. In a vision quest and in the training associated with it, the child comes to know the animals as they are in the bush and to develop his or her own personal relationship to the process of transformation that is central to Dunne-za adaptive strategy. The supernatural animals of mythic times are intelligible transformations of the natural animals upon which the people's lives depend, just as the peo-

ple's cultural competence is based upon an understanding of the transformation of natural animals into cultural resources. The giant animals quite literally represent the relationship of the Dunne-za to their environment.

The events of a Dunne-za person's life relate to the events of their mythology in that both describe an articulation between the lives of people and animals. Human beings live by making contact with animals in the bush and transforming them into cultural resources, such as food and clothing. In myth, human-like animals overcome animal-like humans. The mythic giant animals are metaphoric transformations of everyday events, not a separate, occult reality. The metaphoric relationships stated in Dunne-za myths serve as instructions for the integration of knowledge and experience; the Dunne-za say that a person with mə yine "knows something." In the vision quest, cultural information relevant to the Dunne-za system of meaning becomes internalized as a point of reference for the instruction of subsequent experience; the power and knowledge represented by the myths of the giant animals become a person's own power and knowledge.

The giant animals of mythic times are real to those who know them. At all times the space around a person with recognized mə yine actively represents the quality of his or her knowledge. Within this space the power of the giant animals is contained and controlled just as beneath the contours of the land's appearance the form of their bodies may still be seen. Only in time of need will a person give direct voice to his or her medicine power. At other times it remains an unspoken presence beneath the appearance of everyday reality. Only in his or her dream life does the power holder communicate directly with the symbols of empowerment.

For each power there are certain foods and activities, symbolic of the giant animals' behaviour in the relevant myth, that must not be brought into contact with the power holder. For instance, in one myth a giant spider man lures people to his mountain top web with a giant bullroarer, kills them, and sucks the juices from their bodies until he is overcome by Saya, who turns the monster's own weapon back upon him. I learned that a person whose personal spirit animal is this spider may not hear the sound made by any stretched string because it is evocative of the destructive power of the giant animal of the myth. To violate this taboo and knowingly make such a noise in the power holder's personal space would compel him by the logic of the metaphor on which his life experience is organized, to become "too strong." A person whose power is thus violated must undergo a further transformation, into a representation of the giant animal in the reality of here and now.

A person who has undergone this transformation because of a violation of his personal relationship to the power of his medicine becomes Wechuge, a cannibal monster, who in human form recreates the giant person-eating animals of mythic times. Elsewhere I have described the Wechuge pheno-

menon in detail and compared it to the Algonkian Windigo.[4] In the Dunne-za context the figure of a person transformed into a cannibal monster represents the authority and reality of mə yine power rather than a form of cultural psychosis. The person who has been compelled to become Wechuge systematically and ritualistically acts out the powers of the giant animal as they are stated in the relevant myth. For instance, in a recent case reported to me in which the power of a person with wolf medicine had been violated, the person meticulously filed a large nail into a sharp point, representative of the "silver teeth like knives" given to the giant wolf in the relevant myth. In another case a person with frog power jumped up and down in representation of the behaviour of the mythic frog people. The ritualistic Wechuge performance simply activates dramatically the symbols of those powers that are a constant condition of an individual's identity. As a dramatization of powers, instructed by myth and acquired through a solitary visionary experience, the Wechuge performance seems more like the Kwakiutl Hamatsa than the Algonkian Windigo with which it shares some formal elements. Both Wechuge and Hamatsa dramatize a relationship between mythically represented knowledge and personal experience. In both cases, the metaphor associates the experience of personal transformation with the physical transformation of living sentient animals into food.

Mythic information and its dramatic representation in ritual articulate the place of personal experience within a system of meaning. "Supernatural" phenomena in both contexts are real because they represent a system of relationship. Their reality within the Dunne-za context does not translate simply into our own culture's system of classifying information. Because the two cultures are adaptively and organizationally very different, it is safe to assume that the intelligence of one culture's system of information will differ systematically from the intelligence of the other's. In particular, the traditional mythic intelligence of Dunne-za metaphor represents a meaningful relationship between knowledge about the world and experience of it, while our own culture's scientific intelligence removes knowledge about the world from the direct experience and control of most people. To "know something" in the Dunne-za context is different from knowing something in modern Western society. Among the Dunne-za, the acquisition of mə yine through a vision quest encounter with a giant animal contributes to a person's feeling of control over the significant relationships of Dunne-za life; the experience of personal transformation in modern Western society is relatively removed from the culture's general intelligence.

The anthropologist's personal reality is instructed by his or her participation in a diverse, modern, and historically particular system of information. It is strongly influenced by a sense of the relativity of experience to the particulars of time and place, whereas the context within which traditional

Dunne-za experience is meaningful is specified by their mythic tradition. The fundamental paradigm of modern experience is progressive and historical, while the Dunne-za mythic paradigm is cyclical and experiential. For the Dunne-za, giant animals from the mythic past freely enter the realm of personal experience during the points of transformation in a person's life cycle. In the vision quest, in dreaming, in the Wechuge performance, and in the use of mə yine for curing, the power of the mythic animals becomes operational.

The Dunne-za explain that white men power their machines with the energy of the giant animals by drilling beneath the earth's surface to get their grease, while to the white men this energy comes from oceanic photosynthesis of the long past mesozoic era in the life history of the planet. The life of the mesozoic is forever removed from the direct experience of modern people just as the life of any past age is inaccessible to our experience; the power of the giant animals of mythic times is a constant presence beneath the surface of everyday Dunne-za experience. Their power is linked to a person's own sense of identity. By means of the behavioural taboos instructed by myth, an individual's personal experience is systematically related to their mythic reality. Monsters of mythic times are real to the Dunne-za insofar as they are an inherent property of culturally instructed experience. They cannot be real in the same way within the experience of an anthropologist or any other member of a modern historical culture. They are real within the context of Dunne-za experience, but lose their meaning when removed from that context.

The anthropologist must construct a context within which elements of another culture's belief become intelligible, just as the historian reconstructs the context within which events of the recorded past have meaning. The reality of symbolically mediated experience in another culture known to us through anthropology is much like the experience of life in our own historical past. Both historical and ethnographic facts are meaningful to us only as they can be shown to be part of a system. Information available to people in our modern culture far exceeds the capacity of any one individual to internalize it. Thus, knowledge is acquired through the creative construction of a context articulating a set of facts in a coherent relationship; it is organized into classes of information relevant to specialized interests. Anthropological enquiry is simply one example of the Western practice of creating meaning through the contextualization of information.

Anthropological translation of meanings from another culture requires the construction of a symbolic context representative of the context in the original culture. Most anthropological models do not refer to the *quality* of phenomenological reality with which another culture's symbols are expe-

rienced by its members. Our structural representations translate relationships between formal elements in a cultural system, but do not deal with the problem of the phenomenological or experiential. In failing to take into account his or her own phenomenological assumptions, the anthropologist risks misinterpreting the metaphoric relationships of another culture's system of meaning. For example, to the Dunne-za, sun and moon are a person travelling through the sky bringing into being the days, months, and seasons; to our own culture they are separate astronomical bodies. The difference between the two conceptualizations is phenomenological, not astronomical. To the Dunne-za, sun and moon represent transformative phases of personal experience. Their relationship to one another represents to the Dunne-za their experience of the relationship between ordinary waking, dreaming, and visionary states. Together, sun and moon in the sky are seen as Saya, the culture hero transformer, whose own vision quest transformation from a child named Swan into a world-circling transformer is a prototype for all vision quest empowerment. The Dunne-za represented the sun and moon as a person, not because they misunderstood their physical nature, but because they recognized in the systematic relationships of celestial motion a metaphor for transformations of human phenomenology. In order to understand their metaphor we must translate between their phenomenology and ours, not simply between two conceptions of astronomical reality. Their knowledge of celestial mechanics was accurate and pragmatic rather than fanciful and uninformed. In negotiating undifferentiated terrain they took direction from close observation of the sun's path across the sky. They were aware of the sun's change of direction at the solstices, and they were closely attentive to the phases of the lunar cycle. Indeed, practical astronomical knowledge was far more deeply integrated into the experience and understanding of all members of their society than it is for most people in modern society for whom this information has become the privileged expertise of astronomers. The anthropologist cannot recreate directly the experiential basis of their knowledge, but in coming to recognize it, he can make that recognition a part of his or her understanding of their symbolic referents.

In thinking about the following two Dunne-za stories the reader is asked to remember the experiential basis of Dunne-za knowledge and in particular to recognize the significance they place in dreaming, the vision quest, and mə yine power. The story told by Jumbie presupposes a knowledge of the more general story of Saya and Wolverine Man. It also presupposes, in a Dunne-za listener, a knowledge of Jumbie's own personal medicines. A person's medicines among the Dunne-za are known to those around him or her through symbolic reference in everyday life to the medicine stories. For them, the events of everyday experience are meaningful in relation to the

symbolic context of the stories. Information about both Jumbie's life and the life of Saya is implicit in the telling of Jumbie's story. The anthropologist must know that at least this information, although unstated in the text itself, is integral to the context of Dunne-za reality. In coming to an understanding of Dunne-za meaning, he or she must approach a given text as merely one point of entry into a contextual mosaic.

The medicine man in Jumbie's story is a person whose own vision quest encounter with the giant wolverine-person gives him the wolverine's power over traps. When the people feel themselves trapped by circumstances beyond their control they turn to him for guidance. The story presumes a knowledge of the relationship between vision quest encounters with an animal-person and that animal's powers, as represented in both myth and in observation of animal behaviour. In this case it is known that wolverine is the "boss of furs" and that the culture hero Saya overcame a giant wolverine-person, who lived from trapping people as his game, by tricking him with his own trap. This story is the charter for the power described in Jumbie's story. It is known that wolverines have the ability to steal bait out of traps and to raid caches. When a wolverine comes into contact with a snare he is said to have the ability to go back on his own tracks and lift the snare over his head, rather than blindly struggling forward into the snare. The story of Saya and Wolverine Man tells how the transformer overcomes the giant animal through an understanding of this power. Saya baits Wolverine Man's person trap with his own body; so, in understanding the situation at a higher level than the trapper himself, he is able to set a trap for Wolverine Man. The transformer gains power over wolverine medicine by transforming himself from the victim of Wolverine Man's trap into the bait of his own trap for Wolverine Man, just as wolverines are said to transform the bait of human traps for fur bearing animals into their own food. Wolverine is "boss of furs" because he alone of the fur bearing animals is above the situation that overcomes them. People who know wolverine are expected to be similarly above the situation that overcomes ordinary people. In their dreaming and through their vision quest empowerment these people have access to the cultural strategies represented by wolverine, just as in the vision quest and dreaming of other powers people have access to other kinds of knowledge.

In Jumbie's story the dreamer knows wolverine because of his childhood vision quest experience, instructed by the myth of Saya and Wolverine Man. Thus, the message of Jumbie's story presupposes a knowledge of this story and the cycle of stories about the transformer and giant animals, just as it presupposes the dreamer's vision quest experience of the power represented in the Wolverine Man story. Both stories simultaneously reflect and instruct Dunne-za knowledge and experience.

SAYA AND THE WOLVERINE MAN

One time Saya was walking in the bush. He didn't feel easy. Something was strange, something was not right. He took a big spruce bough and he swept the ground in front of him as he walked through the bush.

Pretty soon he came to a place where all the leaves fell down when he swept the path. He saw a big square hole in the ground, twelve feet deep. At the bottom of the hole were spikes all covered with dried blood. This was the pit of the Wolverine Man who lived on people.

Saya caught some grouse and put their blood all over the spikes. Then he lay down as if he were dead. The Wolverine Man came back to the pit and saw the leaves gone. He said to himself, "Good. Pretty soon there's going to be grease around my mouth. I wonder if it's a man or a woman. Hope there's lots of fat. I haven't eaten good for a long time."

Wolverine Man looked in the pit. The wolverine had a big bag on his back. He always wore it and he put the people he killed in it. "This must be the main game trail," he said. "Every time I come I get game." He reached in and pulled out Saya and put him in the bag. Wolverine Man always wore a big bag on his back. He put the dead people in it. Then he fixed the pit again, putting sticks and leaves over it. "Good," he said, "My old lady is going to love me tonight!" And he set out for his camp.

The Wolverine Man had a bunch of children and a big, big, fat woman. One of his boys was named *Tsimaka,* Whiteface. When the Wolverine Man came into camp, Tsimaka called out, "Daddy's got a big, big bag." Around the camp were people arms, legs, all different parts of people, hanging up drying. "Old man, what do you have? Woman or man?", the old lady said.

"I've got a man inside," he said. "Lot's of fat on his bottom."

"I want that part," said the old lady.

Saya just sat inside listening.

The old lady cut new spruce boughs and laid them out just like people do when they skin a moose. She laid Saya down on the spruce. Saya lay there like he was dead.

"This is the heaviest game I have ever killed," the Wolverine Man said. "He must be very fat. But I'm tired now, I'll skin him later," and he went and lay down and slept.

His children, the wolverine pups, sneaked up closer and looked at Saya. They reached out and felt him. "Really fat," they purred. Saya

opened one eye to look around. Tsimaka saw him and called to his father, "Daddy, that man's not dead. He opened one eye."

Wolverine Man was mad. He said, "You fool, you go to the pit and look at those spikes. They're covered with blood up to here," and he held out three fingers. "Go away, he can't be alive."

Saya had seen a big stick. He reached out and picked it up and stood up. The wolverine lady and all the pups were so scared they jumped on top of the Wolverine Man to hide. But he couldn't move, with his wife and all his pups on him. Saya went *whack, whack* with his stick and they all fell dead. Then he cut them up into little pieces and threw them in the winds. It's a good thing too, because those big wolverines lived on men. They killed many people before Saya stopped them.

But still today wolverines have a ring of white on their fur where that wolverine man used to carry his pack.

STORY TOLD BY JUMBIE

Once upon a time in April, in late winter, when there were monsters, one old medicine man felt *nagata,* the feeling that something bad was going to happen. He felt like that all the time until the time came when the bull moose were getting really fat. Then he and his people moved up the river that comes out of the mountains. They camped three places along the river, past where it turned into the mountains, and they killed a really fat bull moose. Before that they hadn't got anything and they were hungry.

The people who were camped with the Old Man laughed at him when he said he felt strange. But for six days he felt that way. He couldn't eat because he was afraid. The people just laughed at him. "You won't see any monster," they said but on the sixth day he said, "Tomorrow the monster will come." The next day he told the people to move up on top of the high mountain with a flat top. The people moved up there, women and children and the rest. The Old Man stayed down but then he got really scared and he went up on top of the mountain with the rest of the people, for he had seen something really big where the river turned, where they had camped three days before. That was about thirty miles away. If that thing he saw was little like a moose or horse he wouldn't have been able to see it from that far away. It was a really big monster and it was following their tracks towards them.

The Old Man went up on top of the mountain and he told the people, "See, you didn't believe me. Look there and see what is coming." The men went with him and they saw that animal. It had already passed

the second place where they had camped. It went fast like a wolverine, and it was huge. It had a white back with two great humps on it. It was *Nowe nachī*, a giant wolverine. When they saw that, the women all started to cry for their babies because they knew that the animal was going to eat them all.

They saw the animal get to their third camp. When they had run away they had left the fire burning, they were in such a hurry. The animal went into their camp. He went to that fire but there was nobody there and he kept on going, right up that mountain after the people, right straight up. The people's tracks went either side but he came on up the steep part.

The Old Man took off his clothes and wrapped himself in a pure white moosehide and he went down the mountain to that giant animal. When the Old Man was pretty close he called out to the animal, "Where the hell do you think you are going?" The animal didn't see him. He looked back to where he was coming from. The Old Man met the animal and he put his hand on the animal's chest and he said, "Stop!" The animal looked at him and said, "You're the one I am looking for." That old man knew that animal from when he was a little boy. "Follow me down the river," he said, and the giant animal went back where he came from.

The people moved back to their camps. The Old Man was still wearing his moosehide and he told them he was going out to meet the monster. He said he wouldn't be gone very long and he went out. Not too far away he met that big animal. He was gone four days and the people began to worry about him. They thought something had happened to him.

The Old Man went back to the camp. His old, old father was named Tsuketa. He knew that animal too; he knew it better. The Old Man, his son, didn't want to follow that animal, but his father told him he should go. "You should go. He will make you a strong medicine man. It's good medicine." So his son went after the monster.

The Old Man went out to meet that animal. He stayed with him seven days and the animal showed him every kind of trick. The monster slept on top of him. On the seventh day the monster told him to go back. He knew that Tsuketa was worrying about his son. He told him, "If you go a little way from here you will meet your father." The monster told Tsuke, for that was the old man's name, "I am going to meet your *saze* [sister's child]." Tsuke's saze knew the monster too. He was an old man but he had known him when he was young. The monster said, "His mouth stinks too much. He doesn't have much power now." He said that the relative would go out hunting but he wouldn't see him, even

when he was close. Then Tsuke went back a little way and met his father. "You're still alive," his father said, and Tsuke said, "Yes." They went back to camp together.

Tsuke's saze went out hunting the next day. He saw the tracks of the great big monster and he started following them. All day he followed those tracks. He saw that they were coming from where his relatives were camped and he thought that the monster must have eaten all of them. But it soon got dark and still he hadn't seen the monster so he went back to his camp. He told the people, "All day I followed the tracks of *Onli nachĩ*, but I couldn't catch up with him. Maybe he didn't want me to see him. His tracks were coming from where my relatives were camped. Maybe he ate them all." That's how the story goes. That is the end of the story.

For the Dunne-za, to "know something" is to control the experience of its power. The story of Saya and Wolverine Man tells how the transformer overcomes the giant animal through an understanding of its power. In Jumbie's story the medicine man turns back upon his own trail to confront the image of his own childhood encounter with the power of the giant wolverine. With knowledge gained through this experience, the old man took off his clothes, wrapped himself in a pure white moosehide, and went down the mountain to confront the giant animal, in much the same way that the natural wolverine, when it comes into contact with a snare, is said to have the ability to go back on its tracks and lift the snare over its head, rather than blindly struggling forward into its extinguishing enclosure. Jumbie's story and the story of Saya and Wolverine Man both begin with a feeling of premonition, of *nagata*. It is the feeling that comes to a person in possession of mə yine. Every person comes to know a part of Saya's power through the experience of vision quest encounters with a giant animal. Dreaming or the feeling of nagata bring about an emergence of the powers themselves into the world of everyday experience. Where only three days before the people in Jumbie's story had known the security of life in camp, they now recognized a monster on the trail behind them. Like animals caught by their own nature in a situation they do not understand, they flee into the tightening snare of circumstance. But because of his vision quest experience the medicine man has the power to prevent the transformation of their reality into a pit of stakes. Only this knowledge of Wolverine Man's medicine could instruct the people to turn back upon their own tracks to confront the force that is tightening around them. Only with the understanding of wolverine medicine could they know that the force of their terror must be coming from within themselves.

The story of a person's life is predicated upon the story of his or her own

medicine powers. It was from Jumbie that I came to learn the story of the Old Man who knew Wolverine and from Johnny Chipesia that I learned the story of Saya and the Giant Wolverine. From Johnny I also heard a story about Jumbie. According to Johnny's story, both men had once been out trapping together. They had been favoured by Wolverine, the fur boss, and were making their way back to camp, toboggans heavily laden with furs. Trapping had been so good that they had gambled on starting the long trek back to camp only when their supply of grub was entirely gone, but the journey proved to take far longer than expected because of heavy snows. In their eagerness to stay in contact with the trap boss's medicine they had become themselves the victim of a snare of circumstances. Because of the deeply drifted snow they had to break trail step by step with their snowshoes and then go back to drag the laden toboggans after them. What might have been a hard but fast return to the comfort of camp became a terrible ordeal as the trail took its toll of their energies. One night it snowed heavily, and in the morning Johnny could not summon the energy from within himself to crawl from his sleeping robe into such a cold and hungry world. As he lay in shivering despair, all but painted into the frozen landscape by thick new snow, he saw that Jumbie, the older man, was already up and moving about. Then he looked again in amazement. Jumbie was walking barefoot through the snow, gathering Labrador tea to make a hot drink. He made a fire, melted snow, and threw in the leaves for tea. This gave Johnny the energy to overcome his despair and begin another day. When they had both been restored by the hot drink, Johnny asked Jumbie how he had been able to walk through the snow as he did. Jumbie replied, "Wolverine gave me his feet." With Jumbie's knowledge of Wolverine the two trappers lifted the snare of circumstance from their heads and walked away from the trap. Perhaps Jumbie told me the story about the Old Man who knew wolverine because he wanted me to know about the trap medicine that was so much a part of his life.

DISCUSSION

The phenomenology of the anthropologist's culture which distinguishes between myth and reality is an inappropriate instrument for the examination of Dunne-za culture in which myth, dream, and vision articulate a mosaic of meaning underlying the reality of ordinary waking phenomenology. The reality of information coded in myth and processed in dream and vision underlies the relationship of Dunne-za people to their substantive environment just as the bodies of the giant animals are real to them just beneath the surface appearance of their physical terrain. The anthropologist's pheno-

menology is different from that of the Dunne-za, because of his or her primarily institutional, rather than experiential, relationship to the physical environment.

When a Dunne-za band finds itself faced with the trap of a circumstance the people do not understand, symbolized by a giant wolverine, they turn to the person in possession of that animal's medicine and he turns back to confront the monster for them. He is warned of the danger by a feeling of nagata. His experience of the monster as a child gives him knowledge and therefore power over it and the situation it represents. His medicine power internalizing the power of the monster as stated in the myth of Saya articulates the power the Dunne-za recognize in their relationship as humans to the world of animals. It is their superior understanding of their situation that gives them power over it. Their cultural competence is internalized as a programmatic set of instructions that guide individual experience. Through the symbols and experience of personal transformation their culture's adaptive strategy becomes the strategy of individual actors. Their monsters have power over them only to the extent that they symbolize a reflection of their own human powers. They are real as metaphoric transformations of the human power in reflection. Wolverine Man is a statement of the real human adaptive control over situational manipulation that is the essence of hunting and trapping. The animal mistakes the hunter's artifice for a safe trail, but the hunter must make no mistake in his conceptual control of the situation that binds the two together lest their roles revert to the mythic time in which humans were hunted by the giant animals.

In the story of Saya and Wolverine Man, control of the situation turns upon the control of information. Saya asserts his humanity by transforming himself from Wolverine Man's game into his hunter. The roles of hunter and hunted depend upon a conceptual hierarchy. Wolverine Man believes himself to be hunter in his construction of an attractive illusion on the trails of people, but he becomes the hunted when his understanding of the situation is falsified by Saya's categorical transformation of himself from victim of the trap into its bait. In Dunne-za adaptive reality the person who understands his situation has control over it, while, in contrast, in our own adaptive reality understanding and control are removed from one another.

The events of mythic time and space are abstract representations of reality as it is experienced rather than literal realities of a separate order. The metaphoric relationships stated in Dunne-za myth serve as instructions for the integration of knowledge and experience. The transformative experience of the vision quest imparts knowledge that allows a person to control his or her relationship to the physical and social environment. Through the vision quest, mythic metaphor is experienced as reality. A Dunne-za person's medicine power becomes a constant condition of his or her identity. The anthropolo-

gist's reality presupposes knowledge of a naturalistic conception of time and space. In this perspective human experience becomes merely the instrument of knowledge, not its primary focus. The anthropologist knows of an evolutionary past in which the human adaptive pattern had not yet emerged. He or she is equally able to conceptualize a future bereft of human intelligence. From the perspective of our knowledge of an expanding universe of galaxies twenty thousand million years away from the big bang, the events of terrestrial existence shrink to inconsequentiality. The anthropologist must come to terms with the relativity of his or her reality and devise a system of symbolic mediation through which the meaning of another culture's reality can have meaning. The translation of meanings from one culture to another requires a transposition of contexts rather than an importation of a single element from one culture to the other.

Dunne-za medicine powers and the giant animals that represent them are meaningful within the context of a nomadic hunting adaptation. Our own powers as well as the monsters that pursue us are meaningful within the context of a progressive, global, industrial adaptation. Through our understanding of how meaning is constructed for the Dunne-za we may come to know more clearly how our own meaning reflects the processes of historical transformation that carry us forward with their tide. Perhaps the glory of our understanding lies ironically in its impersonality. To know that our personal reality is relative to its time and place in an immense and indifferent universe places a premium on the accuracy of our information about the context within which our meaning is created. In the anthropologist's personal life as well as in his professional life he must be aware of anthropology's reflexive relationship to the lives of the people it studies. In coming to understand the reality of other peoples' lives we can only come to enrich our own.

Notes

1. The fieldwork upon which this article was based and during which the two stories were collected was conducted amongst the Dunne-za people of the Peace River region of British Columbia from 1964 to 1971.
2. Wayne Suttles, "On the Cultural Track of the Sasquatch," *Northwest Anthropological Research Notes* 6, no. 1 (1972): 65–90.
3. Saya is also associated with the daily, monthly, and seasonal transformations of the sun and moon in the sky.

4. "Wechuge and Windigo: A Comparison of Cannibal Belief among Boreal Forest Athapaskans and Algonkians," *Anthropologica* 18, no. 2 (1977): 107–29. For further discussion of the ideas expressed in this article see my "Eye on the Wheel," *IO* 22 (1976): 69–82, and *Swan People, The Prophet Dance among the Dunne-za* (Ottawa: National Museum of Man, Mercury series no. 38, 1978).